

National Audit Office Report on NHS Continuing Healthcare

The National Audit Office has today published its [Investigation into NHS continuing healthcare funding](#) (CHC).

The [Press Release](#) accompanying the [Full Report](#) notes that spending on CHC, NHS-funded nursing care and assessment costs amounted to £3,607 million in 2015-16 and are expected to rise to £5,247 million in 2020-21. It also notes that NHS England wants CCGs to make £855 million of savings on this figure by 2020-21.

The report confirms the view that there is significant variation between CCGs in both the number and proportion of people assessed as eligible for CHC (the CCG variation in eligibility ranged from 28 to 356 people per 50,000 population).

The report notes that the number of people receiving CHC funding 'is rising and the funding of CHC is a significant cost pressure on CCGs' spending'. A note of caution should be attached to this statement. Although the number of people receiving CHC appears to have increased by about 30,000 in the last 10 years, during this period NHS England data suggests that the [NHS has closed over 30,000 overnight beds](#) (from 167,000 to 129,000). If there had not been an equivalent rise in CHC funding as a result, the extra costs caused by these lost beds would have fallen on social services and individuals.